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TAGS: [JO](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [KWBG](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACT TO EVENTS IN GAZA

1. (U) SUMMARY: JORDANIAN MEDIA FOCUSED WITH INCREASING INTENSITY THIS PAST WEEKEND ON EVENTS IN GAZA INVOLVING CLASHES BETWEEN ISRAELI FORCES AND PALESTINIAN MILITANTS. COVERAGE OF EVENTS HAS COMPETED WITH THE KING'S U.S. VISIT FOR PRE-EMINENCE ON THE FRONT PAGES, AND HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY GRAPHIC PHOTOS TAKEN OF CASUALTIES ARRIVING AT GAZAN HOSPITALS AND OF SORROWFUL RELATIVES OF VICTIMS. COMMENTARY HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY AND HARSHLY CRITICAL OF ISRAELI ACTIONS. THOSE ACTIONS ARE PRESENTED IN THE MEDIA AS BEING CONDONED IF NOT TACITLY SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

COVERAGE GRAPHIC, TONE HISTORIC

2. (U) BEGINNING LAST THURSDAY AND THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND, JORDANIAN MEDIA HAVE CRITICIZED THE ISRAELI INCURSION INTO GAZA AND THE RESULTING DESTRUCTION AND LOSS OF LIFE IN HARSH AND ANGRY TERMS, BEYOND THE USUAL NEGATIVE SLANT ON ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS. FREELY USING TERMS SUCH AS "AGGRESSION," "MASSACRES," AND "HOLOCAUST" TO DESCRIBE ISRAELI ACTIONS, PRESS REPORTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GAZA STRIP ARE DECIDEDLY AND HARSHLY ANTI-ISRAELI. THE DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM RAN A STORY ENTITLED "ARAB PUBLIC ANGER AGAINST NEW NAZI CRIMES AGAINST GAZA." AN ARTICLE IN THE DAILY AL-GHAD DENOUNCED ISRAEL UNDER THE HEADLINE "HOT WINTER BURNS GAZA." ALL THE MAJOR DAILIES HAVE RUN STORIES HIGHLIGHTING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AMONG PALESTINIANS, AS WELL FEATURES ON ANTI-ISRAELI PROTESTS HELD ACROSS JORDAN AND THE REGION.

3. (U) SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE ALSO RUN PROVOCATIVE EDITORIAL CARTOONS. TODAY'S AL-GHAD PUBLISHED A CARTOON OF AN ISRAELI HELICOPTER GUNSHIP, ITS FUSELAGE SHAPED LIKE A MENORAH AND ITS ROTORS IN THE SHAPE OF A SWASTIKA, FIRING ROUNDS FROM THE MENORAH'S CANDLESTICK HOLDERS. THE CARTOON RUNS UNDER THE TITLE "GAZA HOLOCAUST," PRESUMABLY IN REACTION TO STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER VILNA'I TO ISRAELI ARMY RADIO FEBRUARY 29. TODAY'S AL-ARAB AL-YAWM PUBLISHED A CARTOON DEPICTING A MAN IN A TRADITIONAL ARAB HEAD-COVERING LOOKING TOWARD GAZA UNDER THE PHRASE, "THE ARAB OFFICIAL SILENCE."

COMMENTARY ACERBIC, PREDICTIONS TRAGIC

4. (U) EDITORIAL COMMENTARY.

-- "THE OPEN BARBARIC WAR AGAINST GAZA"

IN THE MARCH 1 EDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT-ALIGNED, PRO-PALESTINIAN ARABIC DAILY AD-DUSTOUR, SENIOR COLUMNIST ORAIB RANTAWI COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN GAZA VIS-`-VIS THE "MAD AND BARBARIC WAR" AGAINST IT, COMMENTING, "IT IS NOW TIME TO OPEN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS JUST AS MUCH AS IT IS TIME TO BEGIN A NATIONAL DIALOGUE [BETWEEN FATAH AND HAMAS]. HE ARGUES THAT THE SITUATION REQUIRES "A CHANGE IN OUR AGENDA" AND CALLS FOR "RAISING VOICES IN DENUNCIATION AND CONDEMNATION" AND "LIFTING THE ARAB AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE PALESTINIAN SIEGE AGAINST THE GAZA STRIP." RANTAWI CRITICIZES THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, SUGGESTING IT MUST "OVERCOME THE STATE OF HYPOCRISY IT IS LIVING IN AND TO STAND

AGAINST ISRAELI FASCISM." HE CONCLUDES, "WITHOUT THESE REQUIREMENTS, GAZA'S WOUND WILL CONTINUE TO BLEED AND ITS TRAGEDY WILL BE EXACERBATED AND THE SUFFERING OF ITS CHILDREN WILL TURN INTO CURSES THAT WILL HAUNT EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCEPTION."

-- "NO SECURITY AND NO ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL"

SENIOR COLUMNIST SULTAN HATTAB WRITES IN THE MARCH 3 EDITION OF THE LEADING, GOVERNMENT-OWNED ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI, "ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT SECURITY OR PEACE OR STABILITY NOR DOES IT WANT TO BE PART OF THE REGION OR TO DEAL WITH ITS NEIGHBORS SO AS TO ACHIEVE THIS." HE SPECULATES ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QASSAM ROCKETS, WRITING, "THIS IS A PENDING QUESTION... IF THAT [LIBERATION] IS POSSIBLE, THEN THE ENTIRE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE SHOULD JOIN THE ROCKET LAUNCHERS, BUT IF THOSE ROCKETS WILL LEAD THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE INTO AN ISRAELI HOLOCAUST, THEN HAMAS SHOULD RECONSIDER WHAT IT IS DOING. THE PARALLEL QUESTION IS: WILL THE PEACE PROCESS, WHICH IS BEING KILLED BY ISRAEL WHENEVER IT TRIES TO STAND ON ITS FEET, BRING THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SALVATION?" HATTAB CONCLUDES, "THE HELLISH CIRCLE CREATED BY ISRAEL MUST BE BROKEN AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY MUST TURN THE TABLE AND HOLD HAMAS RESPONSIBLE."

-- "JORDAN'S CHOICES AFTER THE FINAL CALL ON WASHINGTON"

MANAGING EDITOR FAHED KHITAN IN THE MARCH 2 EDITION OF THE INDEPENDENT, OPPOSITION ARABIC DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM WROTE THAT JORDAN IS GETTING CLOSER TO "PUBLICLY HOLDING ISRAEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE PROCESS AND LOSING THE FINAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE." HE OBSERVES, "THE KING'S ADDRESS AT THE WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL ALLUDED TO THIS STANCE AND CARRIED A CLEAR AND FRANK MESSAGE TO THE UNITED STATES ABOUT THE NEED TO HOLD IT [ISRAEL] RESPONSIBLE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT WASHINGTON WILL CHANGE ITS STANCE, WHICH IS BIASED TOWARDS ISRAEL." KHITAN COMMENTS, "PERHAPS THE KING'S CURRENT VISIT IS THE LAST IN THE ERA OF BUSH'S ADMINISTRATION AND, THEREFORE, THE KING'S SPEECH WAS A FINAL CALL TO THE U.S. POLITICAL ELITE TO MAKE A MOVE BEFORE THE REMAINING TIME IS OVER. IN A FEW WEEKS, IT WILL BECOME CLEAR HOW COMMITTED THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS TOWARDS FULFILLING ITS PROMISES OF PUSHING THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD AND REACHING AN AGREEMENT BEFORE YEAR'S END." KHITAN ASSERTS THAT ARAB MODERATE COUNTRIES ARE NO LONGER AS CONCERNED WITH PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AS WITH OTHER ISSUES, ASSERTING THAT "ALL PARTIES HAVE WASHED THEIR HANDS OF THE PEACE PROCESS."

-- "AND THEY TALK TO YOU ABOUT QASSAM ROCKETS!"

LOCAL AL-JAZEERA BUREAU CHIEF AND COLUMNIST YASER ABU HILAHEH IN THE MARCH 3 EDITION OF THE INDEPENDENT, ARABIC DAILY AL-GHAD RESPONDS TO STATEMENTS BY THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY'S INFORMATION MINISTER RIAD AL-MALKI. HE WRITES, "MALKI IS IGNORING THE FEELINGS OF THE VICTIMS AND IS FAR FROM A REALISTIC VISION. FORTY PERCENT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE WEST BANK ARE TAKING PLACE WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF QASSAM ROCKETS. HAMAS IS NOT THE ONLY ONE FIRING ROCKETS. THE FATAH-AFFILIATED AL-AQSA BRIGADES ARE FIRING ROCKETS AND SO ARE AL NASSER SALAHEDDIN AND SARAYA AL-QUDS BRIGADES. THOSE ARE NOT MERCENARIES FROM ABROAD OR SOME IDIOTS. THOSE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE FIGHTING AMIDST THEIR OWN PEOPLE AND CHILDREN AND ARE NOT AWAITING SOME ALLOCATIONS FROM TEHRAN TO SPEND IN NIGHTCLUBS IN GAZA! THEY ARE AWARE OF THE IMBALANCE OF POWERS AND THEY ARE IN THE LINE OF FIRE, KNOWING THAT IN AS WEAK AS THOSE ROCKETS MAY BE, THEY STILL ADD TO THEIR STRENGTH." ABU HILAHEH ADDS, "AL-MALKI FAILED TO ANSWER A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: 'HOW COME THE HAMAS AUTHORITY DID NOT COLLAPSE DESPITE ALL THIS SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION?' THE ANSWER IS IN YESTERDAY'S EDITION OF HAARETZ, WHICH MAINTAINS THAT DESPITE THE HIGH COST OF THE CONFLICT IN GAZA, THE PALESTINIANS WILL NOT BREAK FROM HAMAS."

-- "THE GAZA MASSACRES WILL NOT BREAK THE WILL OF OUR PEOPLE"

COLUMNIST YASER ZA'ATREH WRITES IN THE MARCH 3 EDITION OF THE DAILY AD-DUSTOUR, "THE MURDERER OLMERT AND THE WAR CRIMINAL BARAK AND THOSE AROUND THEM ARE DELUSIONAL IF THEY THINK THAT THEIR DIRTY WAR AGAINST OUR KINFOLK IN THE GAZA STRIP AND THE WEST BANK WILL FORCE OUR PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SURRENDER." ZA'ATREH RECOUNTS THE HISTORY OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND COMMENTS, "THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO RESIST AND EVEN THOUGH THEY KNOW THERE IS A DREADFUL IMBALANCE OF POWERS BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR ENEMY, THEY DO REALIZE THAT THEIR ALTERNATIVE IS TO SURRENDER RATHER THAN THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH THEY HAVE TRIED

FOR LONG YEARS WITHOUT ANY TANGIBLE OUTCOME." HE CONTRASTS THOSE ACTIVELY "RESISTING AND STRIKING AT THE ENEMY" WITH ARAB REGIMES "CONTENT WITH JUST WATCHING THE DAILY SCENE OF BLOOD AND DEATH."

-- "THE CHILDREN OF GAZA... WHO TAKES CARE OF THEM?"

SENIOR COLUMNIST SULTAN HATTAB WRITES IN THE MARCH 3 EDITION OF THE DAILY AL-RAI, "U.S.-BACKED ISRAEL HAS CROSSED ALL RED LINES BY SLAUGHTERING CHILDREN AND VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS. REGRETFULLY, THERE IS NO ONE TO DETER IT [ISRAEL] AND STAND IN ITS FACE AS ARABS ARE ATTENDING TO THEIR OWN AFFAIRS, STOCK MARKETS, MONEY, OIL AND INVESTMENTS AND THEY NO LONGER LISTEN TO ANYTHING OR UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING.... WHY?" HATTAB COMMENTS, "THE DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF GAZA AND THE PROCESS OF ANNIHILATING ONE MILLION AND A HALF PEOPLE IN THE STRIP AND TRYING ALL SORTS OF WEAPONS ON THEIR BODIES AND SEVERING ALL THEIR MEANS OF LIFE PROMPTS SUCH QUESTIONS AMIDST OUR GENERATIONS AS: ARE WE ALL ARABS?... IS THERE SUCH A WORD AS 'NATION' IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD THAT IS USED AMIDST OTHER PEOPLES OF THIS EARTH?... IF THE ANSWER IS YES, THEN WHY ARE ARAB OFFICIALS NOT HEEDING THE PLEAS OF THE CHILDREN?"

RUBINSTEIN